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SCIENTIFIC PAPERWORK CONTROLS

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The current emphasis on electronics in the office tends to obscure the fact that these new machines will not, of themselves, reduce or eliminate the paperwork problems that plague management. The company with symptoms of paperwork ills—too many records being created, processed, and maintained at too high a cost—is not going to find a panacea in electronic equipment.

In reality, the wonderful new machines do not cut down on paperwork; they simply increase the rate at which paper is turned out. One of the new electronic typewriters, for example, can do the work of 300 secretaries. It types 1,800 characters per second. In only 10 seconds it can fill a page with 120 columns of figures.

These mass-produced records require more people to spend more time reading them, processing them, and filing them. The increase in our clerical population reflects the growth of paperwork. Today, a conservative estimate is that there are eight million clerical workers in our labor force, an increase of 60 percent just since 1940.

Paper is relatively cheap, but as soon as a human hand touches a piece of it, the dollar costs of personnel, office space, and equipment enter the picture. These operating expenses can reduce or eliminate profit.

The achievement of a paperwork system that contributes to the profitable operation of a company rather than acting as a deadweight or deterrent depends upon proper control over record making and record keeping and can result in very substantial savings. The statisticians say that the average company's profit is 4.3 percent, or \$43,000 on every million dollars' worth of sales. If by applying scientific controls an organization can release 300 filing cabinets, the savings in space and equipment would

approximate \$43,000, an amount equal to the profit on a million dollars in sales. If record making controls release 14 clerks, an organization can save almost another \$43,000. For every dollar that an organization can save through releasing filing space and equipment or reducing clerical expense can add a dollar to its profit sheet.

Scientific Paperwork Controls

The controls that will yield both dollar savings and increased efficiency are scientific ones. They have been evolved through research, testing, observation, and validation through actual installations in pilot projects. One of the organizations that pioneered in the development of objective standards and scientific techniques for controlling paperwork is the National Records Management Council with which the author is associated. The Council was established in 1948, with the aid of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, as a non-profit research, educational, and advisory service for industry and government. It has worked with such organizations as the Kellogg Foundation, the American Historical Association, the Economic History Association, the Business Historical Society, and the Society of American Archivists, as well as leading universities. Its program is administered by a board of directors consisting of businessmen, historians, and archivists.

The purpose of the Council is two-fold:

1. To promote the preservation of key business records reflecting the growth of American free enterprise; and
2. To help industry and government cut down, eliminate, and streamline paperwork.

Scientific records management, which is the goal of NRMC, covers three broad areas:

1. Record making controls: to prevent unnecessary forms and reports from coming into being in the first place, a kind of records "birth control."

* The National Records Management Council, Inc. is a non-profit research, educational, and advisory service. Mr. Shiff in addition to his work with the Council is Adjunct Professor of Records Management and Archives Administration at New York University.

2. Record processing controls: to streamline existing paperwork procedures in order to cut costs and improve quality.
3. Record keeping controls: to differentiate between records that should be kept and those that should be destroyed; to preserve historical records properly; and to insure easy reference to and location of necessary records.

In each of these areas research and experimentation have led to objective standards and precise methods and have made it possible to foretell exactly what results can be obtained by applying scientific controls.

Controlled Record Keeping

Record keeping operations usually offer the greatest potential for immediate dollar savings in space and equipment. Record keeping controls will:

1. Eliminate useless records.
2. Insure a continuing flow of records from office to storage to ultimate disposal.
3. Provide a new type of records center where records can be stored at the lowest possible costs.
4. Guarantee instant reference to any needed record

The Council's experience in this area indicates that 75 percent of a company's records can be turned over through either transfer or disposal. Ordinarily, 55 percent can be sold as waste paper, and 20 percent can be transferred to low-cost records centers. Only 25 percent of an organization's records normally need be maintained in the offices.

Columbia Broadcasting System—Thus far, we have been talking in generalities. Obviously, actual savings in space, equipment, and personnel depend upon the particular conditions in effect at the individual company. Some companies are more subject to government regulation than others. Some, by the very nature of their business, must accumulate and keep more paper. The case of the Columbia Broadcasting System, however, will serve to illustrate what can be achieved through record keeping controls at an organization where the volume of paper is essentially high.

At the period we are describing, CBS had more than 40 departments in 10 different locations throughout New York City. Each of these departments was busy filing and storing about 1,500 varieties of forms, letters, and reports. As broadcasting and manufacturing activities were on the upswing, the prospect was that this material would accumulate even more rapidly. Management decided to seek outside technical assistance to help it define the extent of its problems, to supply guidance in applying remedial measures, and to provide the type of assistance that would leave the company prepared to carry on the program, in the future, by itself.

A two-day survey of the CBS situation by the Council resulted in an audit report indicating that the company was storing an estimated total of 33

million pieces of paper in 11,323 file drawers occupying 22,000 square feet of valuable floor space. The audit further gave CBS management an evaluation of this volume of records in terms of objective standards and a translation of this analysis into actual dollars and cents.

The standards employed in the audit, which were developed by NRMC included:

1. The volume of records in relation to the number of personnel.
2. The dollar costs of records in the office, in storage, and on microfilm.
3. The volume of space and equipment in relation to the volume of records.
4. The ratio of turnover of records in comparable organizations.

According to the audit, at least 30 percent of the files were unnecessary. The survey indicated exactly where savings might be accomplished and how much they would amount to.

The audit itself involved these steps:

1. Taking a physical inventory of the 33 million pieces of paper in every location. For each of the 1,500 types of records, the inventory noted the title, the description, the location, and other pertinent data.
2. Appraising for retention each type of record according to these basic standards:

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- a. Actual company usage.
- b. The practice of comparable companies in retaining similar records.
- c. Requirements of existing federal, state, and local regulations.

During the appraisal, special studies were made of correspondence and various series of records. In this way, it was possible to identify and segregate "policy" material from routine papers. This procedure eliminated the need for a "weeding" of all records and automatically separated important documents from the mass of everyday paperwork.

The appraisal resulted in the consignment of over 100 drawers of teletype messages to scrap since they were of a temporary nature. On the other hand, another study showed that program scripts were required and that a selective retention system should be developed for them.

After the appraisals had been made and retention schedules for each type of record agreed upon, all of the records were marked for: (1) retention in offices for a definite period of time; (2) transfer to the newly designed records center; or (3) disposal as waste paper.

Essential to Controlled Record Keeping, the term used to designate the record keeping system developed by the council, is a new-type records center. These centers achieve records storage ratios of approximately five cubic feet of records for each square foot of space. That this represents an outstanding improvement in the utilization of space for storing semi-active records is clear when compared to the normal storage ratio of offices, where only one cubic foot of records is stored in each square foot of space.

The costs of keeping records under scientific controls are surprisingly low in contrast to the costs of the usual systems. A records center assuring prompt reference service need cost only 75 to 90 cents per cubic foot per year. (These figures include the costs of personnel, space, and equipment.) On the other hand, the typical cost of maintaining records in the office, is about \$7.50 per cubic foot per year. The average storage cost of conventional systems is about \$3.00 per year.

The basic control tool for the operation of the records center is the records control cards. These cards serve as an index for records stored in the center. When a record is destroyed, a notation is made on the control card.

The cards are filed alphabetically, by type of record within each department, in a visible card index. The visible file pinpoints the location of a record anywhere in the center. By looking at the control card, it is possible to tell, for instance, that 115-4-C3 locates a record in Room 115, Section 4, in the third drawer of the third cabinet (C3). The entire procedure makes it possible to keep office records at an absolute minimum while making maximum use of the stored records in the center.

EXHIBIT I **GAINS FROM SCIENTIFIC RECORDS** **MANAGEMENT AT TYPICAL INSTALLATIONS**

Organization	Records destroyed	Records transferred to new records center	Total: records improved index
City of New York (pilot installation)	47%	26%	73%
Columbia Broadcasting System	46	21	67
Electric Storage Battery Company	23	27	50
El Paso Natural Gas Company	28	37	65
Hamilton Standard Division (United Air- craft Corporation)	20	33	53
Irving Subway Grating Company	69	7	76
Reaction Motors Company	9	69	78
Scott Paper Company ..	44	21	65

Members of the CBS staff who were specially trained by the Council operate the new Controlled Record Keeping system installed by the Council. An operating manual was prepared to help them weed out useless records systematically and to keep a continuous flow of the records from the offices to the low-cost records center and, eventually, to the waste paper dealer. In the center, the latest storage methods enable the company to pare costs even further by increasing the volume of records stored per square foot, without sacrificing reference service.

In addition to the obvious control over and security of its record keeping, the Columbia Broadcasting System achieved tangible benefits measured in dollars and cents. Initial savings have amounted to \$41,000, achieved through:

1. Reducing the purchase of new equipment valued at \$8,000.
2. Releasing 171 steel filing cabinets having a replacement value of \$15,389.
3. Releasing for other use 6,309 square feet of space worth \$17,036 a year.
4. Selling 1,000 metal transfer files and 40 tons of waste paper.

Of the original 33 million pieces of paper, only 32.8 per cent remains in the offices. About 46.5 per cent was sold as waste paper, while 20.7 per cent was transferred to the records center.

Electric Storage Battery Company—Typical of a manufacturing organization that turned to record keeping controls is the Electric Storage Battery Company. Management at this firm realized that it was pouring too many dollars into the maintenance and storage of its records and that space, time,



APRIL ATLANTA AREA ECONOMIC INDICATORS

ITEM	APRIL 1955	MARCH 1955	% Change	APRIL 1954	% Change
EMPLOYMENT					
Job Insurance (Unemployment)					
Payments -----	\$254,505	\$306,749	-17.0	\$378,775	-32.8
Job Insurance Claimants† -----	4,546	4,454	+2.1	5,255	-13.5
Total Non-Agricultural Employment ---	304,750	306,500*	-0.6	297,950	+2.3
Manufacturing Employment -----	86,150	84,600	+1.8	79,300	+8.6
Average Weekly Earnings,					
Factory Workers -----	\$68.23	\$66.42	+2.7	\$61.86	+10.3
Average Weekly Hours,					
Factory Workers -----	41.1	40.5	+1.5	39.4	+4.3
Number Help Wanted Ads -----	9,748	8,748	+11.4	6,961	+40.0
CONSTRUCTION					
Number Building Permits					
City of Atlanta -----	1,085	1,094	-0.8	946	+14.7
Value Building Permits					
City of Atlanta -----	\$5,257,219	\$6,296,167	-16.5	\$6,583,267	-20.1
Employees in Contract Construction ---	18,250	18,000*	+1.4	15,300	+19.3
FINANCIAL					
Bank Debits (Millions) -----	\$1,355.5	\$1,506.0	-10.0	\$1,298.4	+4.4
Total Deposits (In Millions) -----	\$1,002.8	\$984.9	+1.8	\$941.7	+6.5
(Last Wednesday)					
POSTALS					
Postal Receipts -----	\$1,426,906	\$1,615,445	-11.7	\$1,429,437	-0.2
Poundage 2nd Class Mail -----	1,599,003	1,427,667	+12.0	1,462,487	+9.3
OTHER					
Department Store Sales Index					
(Adjusted) 1947-49=100) -----	151	139	+8.6	133*	+13.5
Retail Food Price Index					
(Adjusted) 1947-49=100) -----	110.8	110.0	+0.7	112.8	-1.8

Data on the number of telephones and number of telephone calls which usually appears was not available this month.

*Revised

†City of Atlanta only.

*Claimants include both the unemployed and those with job attachments, but working short hours.

Sources: All data on employment, unemployment, hours, and earnings: Employment Security Agency, Georgia Department of Labor; Number Help Wanted Ads: Atlanta Newspapers, Inc.; Building permits data: Office of the Building Inspector, Atlanta, Georgia; Financial data: Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System; Postal data: Atlanta Post Office; Retail Food Price Index: U. S. Department of Labor; Department Store Sales and Stocks Indexes: Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta and Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System; Telephones in Service: Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company.



JANUARY THROUGH APRIL, 1954 AND 1955

1955	1954	ITEM	PER CENT CHANGE
\$27,835,956	\$19,236,100†	Value Building Permits, City of Atlanta -----	+44.7
34,077	26,015	Number Help Wanted Ads -----	+31.0
17,800	14,838	No. Construction Employees* -----	+20.0
N.A.	N.A.	Department Store Stocks** -----	+13.0
N.A.	N.A.	Department Store Sales** Based on Dollar Amounts -----	+9.0
3,658	3,382	Number Building Permits, City of Atlanta -----	+8.2
\$5,435.1	\$5,028.5	Bank Debits (Millions) -----	+8.1
\$1,002.8	\$941.7	Total Deposits (Millions)** -----	+6.5
83,813	78,700	No. Manufacturing Employees* -----	+6.5
5,597,430	5,276,638	Poundage 2nd Class Mail, Atlanta Post Office -----	+6.1
\$66.02	\$62.41	Average Weekly Earnings, Factory Workers* -----	+5.8
\$5,735,866	\$5,521,052	Postal Receipts, Atlanta Post Office -----	+3.9
303,863	296,838	Total Non-Agricultural Employment* -----	+2.4
40.5	39.7	Average Weekly Hours, Factory Workers -----	+2.0
110.8	112.8	Retail Food Price Index (April) -----	-1.8
19,949	22,832	Job Insurance Claimants -----	-12.6

†Special ruling permitted construction of \$20,500,000 Grady Hospital addition without permit. If included, total above is \$39,736,100 and the change becomes minus 29.9%.

*Average Month

**End of Period

N.A.—Not Available

Sources: Same as Page 4

and money could be saved through intelligent controls. The program worked out by management in consultation with the Council resulted in annual savings of thousands of dollars, the elimination of unnecessary filing, economies in space and equipment, and the cutting out of needless microfilming.

NRMC followed its standard procedure of first conducting an audit and then tailoring a program to the needs of the individual organization. Through physical inventory, every type of record was identified by type and by location. Then retention schedules were drawn up. The decisions as to the life span of each piece of paper were based on the requirements of state and federal laws, on the regulations of government agencies, on the company's own operating needs, and on the practices of other companies in the same or comparable business. Lastly, a new-type records center was set up.

The center at the Electric Storage Battery Company consists of double banks of steel shelving arranged back to back, with 32-inch aisle space between the tiers. The records containers are cardboard cartons, each holding about one cubic foot of records. Space is not reserved for the various departments; it is filled as it becomes needed. The same type of visible card index described in the CBS installation assures both ready reference and lasting control over the material in storage.

The immediate result of the new program at Electric Storage Battery was that in-the-office filing was cut in half. Before controls were installed, 6,694 cubic feet of records had been stored in the offices. Analysis showed that 23 per cent could be disposed of as waste paper; 27 per cent could be transferred to the records center; and only 50 per cent which was needed for daily operations would have to be left in the office.

The company's equipment needs were cut sharply. It could reclaim for future use the equivalent of 195 four-drawer filing cabinets. It could look forward to a freeze on filing equipment purchases for three to five years.

A considerable economy was achieved in microfilming. In the past, the company had spent more than \$60,000 to microfilm about six million documents on 3,000 rolls of film. Since indiscriminate use of microfilm has ceased, the company saves about \$6,000 a year.

Controls on Record Making and Record Processing

The natural adjunct of control over record keeping is control over record making. From record making it is only one step to record processing. Management has wide latitude in these areas to promote efficiency through the application of scientific techniques. Here, for instance, are several fields in which thoughtful control can produce distinct benefits:

1. **Forms and reports control.** Since business forms and reports are the tools of the clerical employee, it is clear that the way to control

clerical operations is to exercise the proper checks and restraints over their tools. Careful analysis and realistic appraisal can eliminate useless forms and consolidate and standardize those that are required. Through re-design, forms and reports can become more effective media of communication and information. In addition, by cutting out non-essential forms and reports, the clerical workload is reduced, with an attendant reduction in costs.

2. **Streamlining correspondence.** Most businessmen will agree that too many routine letters are being dictated, typed, reviewed, and filed. Competent stenographers are rare, and it is wasteful to have them spend their time taking routine dictation and typing the letters. The solution is to analyze existing correspondence so as to develop form letters, pattern paragraphs, and other correspondence shortcuts.
3. **Quality control of paperwork.** This is a method for measuring, improving, and maintaining the quality of repetitive clerical operations. As in the factory, quality control in clerical work is intended to maintain a consistent quality level through the use of established standards and scientific controls. Paperwork can be produced and maintained at a given level, with less review and checking, by selecting for inspection only that portion of the clerical product that requires verification—and only to the minimum extent needed. One hundred per cent inspection does not necessarily result in 100 per cent quality. Thus, quality control seeks to reduce the amount of inspection required, the number of errors made, and the costs of the entire procedure.

Oneita Knitting Mills—The integrated paperwork installation at Oneita Knitting Mills illustrates the advantages obtainable through the institution of controls over record making and record processing. Paperwork simplification gave this company improved controls over all phases of its operations, gave management more precise information, gave it to them faster—and saved clerical costs as well.

The company had three areas where it felt improvements could be made:

1. **Confirmation of customers' orders.** The factory acknowledged receipt of an order, asked for instructions about certain specifications, and finally followed through to make sure that the customer received the goods he had ordered on the given date.
2. **Production control.** Management wanted to be certain that nothing blocked the flow of goods between their manufacture and their delivery to customers. It was necessary for the factory to know, whether enough orders were on hand to justify making a particular item or style of item. Supervision wanted to be sure that orders were not held up unnecessarily.

3. Sales analysis. To plan production, management had to know its past sales volume, what individual customers were buying, what styles and what items were being sold.

In each of these areas, management relied on a number of forms and records to supply the necessary information, and the paperwork load seemed unnecessarily heavy. It was decided that controls would center around the concept that all paperwork connected with the receipt, production, billing, and shipment of an order should be regarded as one integrated operation. The first step in carrying out this principle took about three weeks and consisted of tracking down and studying the path of every single form in the work stream. Then, a few weeks were spent talking with the people responsible for every operation, gaining insight into their problems, learning from them which solutions appeared most feasible.

This participation by interested personnel is highly desirable. Not only do the paperwork specialists become thoroughly familiar with actual practices, but the people who will have to carry out the new system feel a sense of satisfaction from having had a part in the formulation of new procedures. They are more likely to work for the success of a new system which they have helped develop than for one which has simply been imposed upon them from above or by outside "experts."

As a result of observation, analysis, and redesign, Oneita now uses a multipurpose form that serves five major purposes. A multilith master is produced, and 11 copies of it are made for each order. Each department that must process or maintain a record relating to a given order thus has the necessary copies of the master form. Only two additional operations on the master are required to complete the paperwork on an order. Copies of this key form serve as shipping tickets, accounts receivable records, and production control documents. They also provide invoice analysis information. This one record serves the needs of sales, production, distribution, accounting, and administrative control. A similar program of observation, analysis, and redesign marked the development of a paperwork system for production control.

EXHIBIT II ONEITA PAPERWORK PROGRAM Old Procedures

Separate and distinct forms to:

1. Acknowledge receipt of an order.
2. Request label and hanger instructions from customer.
3. Give specifications to factory.
4. Provide basis for billing.
5. Act as shipping tickets.
6. Report production required.
7. Schedule production.
8. Report completion of production on work in progress through various sections of factory

—knit and dye cutting, finishing, and shipping.

New Procedures

ONE form that performs all the first five listed functions.

ONE form that performs the last three listed functions.

As a result of the Oneita installation of scientific paperwork control, management gained these specific benefits:

1. Improved customer relations since paperwork simplification has eliminated errors in quantity, pricing, or product that are likely to occur as information is copied from one form to another.
2. Strong controls over production since the new records procedures show immediately whether a department is meeting schedules, what the status is on work in progress, and where any order is at a given time.
3. Complete sales analysis data which enables management to plan production more accurately and direct its sales efforts more intelligently.
4. Improved utilization of plant and personnel since more complete data makes it possible to schedule production more efficiently.

It is interesting to note that Oneita made all these improvements in its paperwork operations without adding a single extra employee to the payroll.

Operation Time Capsule

The cases cited above have been examples of records management telling companies what **not** to create, what **not** to process, what **not** to keep. The other half of the records manager's responsibility, however, is the obligation to help companies create, process, and preserve their key records. The corporate and individual experience mirrored in these records is a company asset. The records of a company's experience, of its growth, provide invaluable background material and are valuable administrative guides and references. Historical records also provide information for advertising and public relations and can be used to strengthen the bond between management and stockholders.

Only a small proportion of company documents fall into the category of key records which should be preserved. Yet in spite of the many records companies keep there are gaps in this documentation. Many important decisions, much policy background goes unrecorded. Therefore, it is the responsibility of records management not only to help industry safeguard its core of key records but also to provide guidance in the creation of proper documentation. This two-fold program is termed "Operation Time Capsule" by the Council.

Through the Time Capsule technique, management can make use of records already on hand.

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Scientific methods of inventory and appraisal cull from the mass of routine material those records that have lasting significance. To help fill the gaps in documentation and to aid in the creation of key records, the methods of oral history are applied. For example, a company Time Capsule should include microfilm copies of vital documents such as board minutes, deeds, leases, and the like; recorded interviews with key executives; samples of new products; motion pictures of plant operations and major events; and outside comments on personnel or operations.

The value of a Time Capsule goes even beyond that of an administrative reference tool. Every action of industry is subject to scrutiny—and criticism—by the public, the government, stockholders, customers, labor unions, and employees. A remark taken out of context, an action not sufficiently explained, can reflect unfavorably upon the organization. However, when key records are readily available to the proper people with the proper safeguards, misconceptions and distortion will be reduced. Key records placed in a company Time Capsule cannot be tampered with; their objectivity and accuracy are insured.

To carry out the Time Capsule idea, records management works within the complex network of streamlined systems and procedures already in existence. This new concept of company history in the "deep freeze" calls for a built-in method of documentation, which emphasizes information, not pieces of paper. The entire program can be coordinated very effectively with a program for the protection of all vital records against the hazards of fire, flood, or even warfare.

Records Management as a Science

Some individuals may feel that the controls previously discussed are self-evident and can be instituted simply by applying old-fashioned "horse sense." It is true that common sense will prompt management to take remedial measures when a paperwork operation seems unnecessarily costly or when efficiency is on the downgrade. However, knowing precisely what to do and how to do it requires the knowledge and methods of the pro-

fessional. It is easy to apply a local remedy to a minor cut or bruise, but we call in the skilled physician to diagnose and prescribe for major ills.

Scientific records management is solidly grounded in research and experience. It is constant research, not guesswork or wishful thinking, that results in objective standards and proven techniques. Only the specialist can tell management what kind of records it should be creating and why; how long those records should be kept; what the records improvement index should be; what the ratio of records to personnel should be; at what point it is advisable to use microfilm; and when machines should be utilized—and what type of equipment is best for that company.

From the specialist in scientific records management, a company can expect detailed and exact information of this type. In addition, management has a right to expect certain other data **in advance** of committing itself to a proposed program:

1. The specific objectives of the recommended program.
2. The type of work involved.
3. How long it will take.
4. How much it will cost.
5. Who will do the work.
6. The tangible benefits that will result.

If this information cannot be provided before the company undertakes the program, management should have some reasonable doubts about the entire project.

To safeguard itself, a company should also be certain that the program will result in an actual working installation, not a portfolio full of suggestions and projected plans. Finally, management should be sure that the program, once installed, can be carried on successfully after the experts have taken their leave. For records management is a **continuing control**, not a shot-in-the-arm type of operation that is over and done with once the initial enthusiasm has worn off. A sound program not only overhauls existing procedures but also prepares the company and its personnel to apply the proper controls and adjustments in accordance with current operating needs.